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### **UPDATED Oct. 4, 4 p.m.—UNIVERSITY ADVISORY: Police Investigating Campus Sexual Assault**

Office of University Communications

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# UPDATED Oct. 4, 4 p.m.—UNIVERSITY ADVISORY: Police Investigating Campus Sexual Assault

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Office of University Communications

October 2, 2013

## UNIVERSITY ADVISORY

To: GWU Students, Faculty & Staff

From: Gardner-Webb University Communications

Date: Oct. 2, 2013

Subj: Sexual Assault on Campus—Oct. 1, 2013

(SEE BELOW FOR UPDATES)

GWU Campus Police are investigating a sexual assault against a recent GWU alumna that occurred on campus on Oct. 1 around 9 p.m. near the Lake Hollifield Complex.

The female victim reported being raped by a single, male assailant. She was examined at Cleveland Regional Medical Center in Shelby, N.C.

No other injuries were reported. Police will release additional information as it becomes available.

At this time, the assailant has not been apprehended. The community is encouraged to remain vigilant and to report any suspicious activity or details that may be pertinent to the investigation to GWU Campus Police at 704-406-4444.

Media inquiries should be directed to the GWU Communications office at 704-406-3221 (cell 704-418-3629) or 704-406-2349 (cell 704-300-6340).

UPDATED: 2 p.m. Oct. 2, 2013

- After initial interviews with the victim, police say they have limited information on the perpetrator. He reportedly has a beard, a southern accent, and did not have a weapon but was able to overpower the victim.
- At this point, police say the assailant is a threat to the public, given the visibility of the area where the attack occurred and the number of people within proximity of the incident.

UPDATED: 1:30 p.m.; Oct. 3, 2013

Officials hope to re-interview victim on Friday. If any new information is gathered, the Gardner-Webb University Communications office will provide updates following that interview.

Utilizing surveillance video from the campus apartments, police said there were a few individuals who were in the vicinity around the same time frame as the attack. They were able to see which apartment building those people went to and plan to go door-to-door to collect additional information that could assist the investigation.

Authorities are hoping people will contact them if they remember seeing anything unusual or out of the ordinary on the evening of the attack. All tips are confidential and anonymous. Call 704-406-4444.

Officers plan to double their nighttime patrol efforts on campus, and officers with the Boiling Springs Police department are also on high alert.

Officers are encouraging students to walk in pairs or use a buddy system when out, just as they would have advised prior to this incident.

Officers are encouraging students and other members of the community to be especially aware of their surroundings. Walking/running alone and/or using earphones, cell phones, or other devices could make one an easier target.

## GWU Sexual Assault Investigation

UPDATE: 4 p.m.; Oct. 4, 2013

The Gardner-Webb University Campus Police department offers the following additional information related to the Tuesday night attack on a female alumna:

- Officers conducted door-to-door interviews yesterday with individuals who reside at campus apartments that may have witnessed unusual activity. No new information was collected as a result of that effort.
- Earlier today, the victim told police that she remembered the assailant had a somewhat smoky, burnt smell. She could not provide other information.

- Authorities say the victim was attacked from behind, compromising her vision and forcing her to rely on other senses (hearing, sense of smell, touch) in order to give authorities details about the assailant.
- Officers are asking members of the community—both on campus and within the community at large—to call them with tips or information that could be relevant to the investigation. All tips are anonymous and confidential. Call 704-406-4444.
- Officers have witnessed several female students/community members jogging alone at night, using earphones. While they don't want people to be afraid, they do emphatically urge residents to utilize the buddy system and be sure to run/walk in pairs if at all possible.